The existing policy of the Government regarding provision of telecom. facility in rural, hilly, tribal and backward areas (including remote and interior areas) is to provide at least one telecom. facility on fully subsidised basis within about 5 Kms. of every inhabited place. For this purpose country has been divided into hexagons of 5 Kms. sides each and a principal village preferably a Panchayat Head quarter in it is earmarked for providing telecom. facility. The facility in all such hexagons is to be provided progressively and to over all the hexagons by the end of 8th plan period. While selecting hexagons for providing telecom, facility priority is given to hexagons with a population of 5000 or more in normal areas and 2000 or more in hilly and tribal areas.

There are a total of 4842 such inhabited Hexagons in Maharashtra out of which 2929 Hexagons have been provided with Telecom. facility as on 31-3-89.

(b) There are proposals to open about 60 more Post Offices in the rural areas of the State by 31-3-1990 subject to approval of Ministry of Finance.

347 Long Distance Public Telephones are planned to be opened in rural areas, including remote and interior areas of Maharashtra during 1989-90. These opened in Post Offices will be provided with telegraph facility on phonocom basis.

As regards Telephone Exchanges the information is being collected and will furnished later on.

Pending cases of freedom fighters from Bihar

209. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of cases of freedom fighters pension from Bihar pending for the last one year and two years respectively;

(b) what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government propose to take special steps to clear the said cases?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED) : (a) to (c) The required information is as given below :

(i) 4,623 cases in which the State Govt. has recommended that the pension may not be sanctioned. These are pending for less than a year. These cases are pending because priority was given to those cases in which the State Govt. had recomended sanction of pension.

(ii) 186 cases in which the State Govt. have recommended sanction of pension but their recommendation has been received only recently i.e. after 31-10-1989.

(iii) 98 cases of those who have claimed participation in the Arya Samaj Movement in Hyderabad in 1938-39, the Non-Official Committee is to consider these cases. They have been requested to consider these cases early.

Notices to Villagers in Bharuch District under Official secrets Act

210. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whther it is a fact that notices have been issued to a dozen villagers of Navgam in Bharuch District in the vicinity of Sardar Sarover Project as prohibited area under the Official Secrets Act of 1923 ;

(b) if so, whether these notices have been returned by the villagers ; and

(c) what is the number of tribal population displaced with the help of police from this area?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED) : (a) The Government of Gujarat has issued a notification under section 2(8)(d) of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 declaring the dam site and the surrounding areas covering 12 villages as a prohibited place.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Steamer service between Bombay and Goa

2121. DR. BAPU KALDATE : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) what steps have been taken by Government to resume the Konkan Coastal passenger steamer service btetween Bombay and Goa; and

(b) by when the service is likely to be provided for the people in his sector?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN) : (a) and (b) The two steamers M.V. Konkan Sevak and M.V. Konkon Shakti, which were being operated by Shipping Corporation of India between Bombay and Goa, were placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Defence with effect from 29-1-1988 and 2-5-1988, respectively. Shipping Corporation of India do not propose to resume this service even after the return of the two steamers to them. M.V. Konkan Shakti was built in 1964 and M.V. Konkan Sevak in 1965. Both the vessels have outlived normal life and are due for scrapping. Government of India had suggested to the Government of Maharashtra and Goa that they might consider acquiring, singly or jointly, suitable new or second-hand vessels and share the losses, if any, involved in running this service. In the mean time, applications from three private parties have been cleared for acquisition of catamaran vessels for operating passanger services between Bombay and Goa.

Government is also re-examining the policy of providing better coastal services in Konkan and elsewhere.

Meeting for solution of Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary dispute

212. DR. BAPU KALDATE : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Central Government, as promised, had arranged a meeting between the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka to find out a solution to the issue of bondary dispute between the two States before the imposition of President's rule in Karnataka?

(b) If so, when and the outcome thereof ; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED) : (a) to (c) The former Home Minister had remained in touch with the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka separately in the matter. As a prelude to the holding of a joint meeting between the Chief Ministers of the two States, it was considered appropiate to have separate dicussions with them. Accordingly, the Home Minister invited in the first insitance the then Chief Minister, Karnataka to come for discussions on 17-4-1989. The latter expressed inability to keep this appointment and asked for any date between 28-4-1989 and 6-5-1989.